

Troops, residents celebrate reopening of school

By Spc. Alexis Harrison
2-1 Cav. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD - Do you remember your first day of school? It was one of the first times you'd be away from your family, and you were probably a little nervous. Now, imagine walking through one of the worst neighborhoods in Iraq just to go to school.

More than 3,200 young Iraqi boys made the trek down one of the dangerous Al Doura streets to go to class. A new classroom, new books and computers awaited them thanks to some hard work from their local leaders and some American Soldiers.

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 14th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, members of the "Black Jack" Brigade and Soldiers from the 414th Civil Affairs Battalion went to the Al Nahraen High School for boys to celebrate its grand reopening Jan. 10.

Although it was in one of the area's more dangerous neighborhoods, thousands of young Iraqi boys, locals and community leaders were on hand for the celebration and ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Capt. Eric Fedak, a team leader from Company B, 414th Civil Affairs Battalion, said that reopening schools like Al Nahraen gives the young men in the com-



(Photo by Spc. Alexis Harrison, 2-1 Cav. Public Affairs)

Iraqi Gen. Gazwan, the Al Nahraen High School headmaster, District Advisory Committee Chairman Mr. Sabiah and neighborhood advisory members cut the ribbon during the reopening of the high school in the Al Doura neighborhood Jan. 10. Members from the community and Soldiers from Task Force 1-14 attached to the 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div., recently completed the renovation project for the more than 3,200 school boys.

munity pride in their neighborhood and themselves.

The school project took a little more than 90 days, more than \$140,000, and dozens of local workers to complete the

renovation. Fedak said that having locals perform most of the work helps bring the

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Soldiers down range open wide and say 'Aaaaah!'

By Staff Sgt. Mary Rose
7th MPAD

CAMP LIBETY, Iraq - Troops don't have to wait until they get home to get good dental care.

Dental needs on the front lines are a priority for a particular airborne medical company.

The 257th Medical Company (Dental Services) from Fort Bragg, N.C., with

support from other units and individuals, operate dental clinics throughout the southern half of Iraq.

The unit currently manages clinics at Camp Liberty, Camp Taji, Forward Operating Base Echo, Tallil Airbase, the International Zone in Baghdad and Camp Bucca.

Not all of these clinics provide the exact kind of care as others, but between them, they

can do just about everything but orthodontics, said Staff Sgt. Darrell Ramsay, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the Liberty Dental Clinic here.

At the Liberty Dental Clinic they perform sick call procedures in the morning and schedule routine appointments in the afternoon.

"We provide emergency treatments, extractions, fillings, bridges, crowns and what a

normal patient would need," said Capt. Miguel Martinez, a dentist from 3rd Medical Company.

The dental clinic also provides night guards for teeth grinding purposes and dental prosthetic work, according to Ramsay, a native of Clearwater, Fla. Ramsay said his clinic provides service to approxi-

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Soldiers protect medical supply delivery

By Sgt Cheryl Cox
1-1 Cav. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - One of the long range goals for the military in Iraq is for the Iraqi people to be able to travel freely without risk of something happening because of the areas they travel through.

But until this can happen, Soldiers from the 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division are providing safety for those who need to pick up bulk supplies from areas they don't feel safe.

One such convoy took place Jan. 24 from Taji to Baghdad and back.

It is important that all medical centers are able to get to Baghdad safely so they can provide proper care to their patients, explained Capt. John McGowan, commander of Company C, 414th Civil Affairs Battalion, hailing from Birmingham, Ala.

"The supplies that we came out here to pick up are going to supply clinics for six months," said McGowan. "Mohammed Brahim Mahmood, the city council assistant for the Tarmiyah Qada (council) will take the supplies back to the Tarmiyah Emergency Center to be broken down for the smaller clinics in Tarmiyah, Mushahidah, Abyachi and Sab al Bor."

"The last time we were able to pick up medical supplies was in June of last year,"



(Photo by Sgt. Cheryl Cox, 1-1 Cav. Public Affairs)

Sgt. Nestor Rivera, of Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment and a native of Queens, N.Y., assists employees at the Ministry of Health medical supply warehouse in Baghdad Jan. 24.

Mahmood said. "With all the violence on the roads and within the cities, we want to ensure that these supplies will make it back to the clinics so we have asked the Soldiers to assist us with safety along the roads."

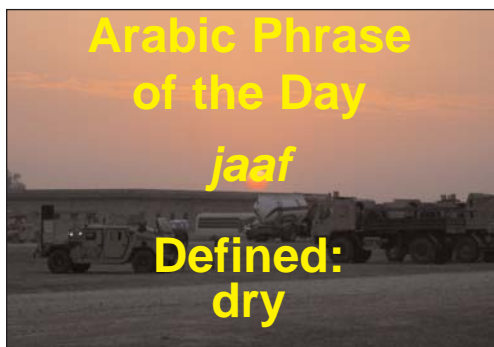
Although the Ministry of Health is making great strides in providing the people with the supplies they need, there are still shortfalls and the clinics are unable to request a pick-up of just specific items.




"Each time we come to the supply warehouse, we pick up a standard list of

supplies," said Mahmood. "We have to come down to request the supplies two days in advance, but due to limited stock, we can't request just specific items."

Soldiers will continue to assist with security for these medical supply deliveries

"Every day the Soldiers work toward making Iraq a safer place," said McGowan. "And one day we hope the people of Iraq will be able to move about freely and no longer need our assistance to feel safe along the roads."



Iraq 3-Day Weather Report			
	Today	Tomorrow	Thursday
High: 68 Low: 37	High: 68 Low: 39	High: 70 Low: 39	

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Boys school opens doors again

School

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community closer.

"Most of the people who worked on this project were from that neighborhood," he said. "So, we employ people from the neighborhood to give them something they can be proud of."

Fedak said that everything but the structure itself was replaced. The plumbing, wiring, desks, computers, and even a new science laboratory were made new for the students.

"One of the things 1-14 is looking at is mainly around education. If we can make sure the kids are being educated then the terrorists won't try to oppress the people," he said. "The more people are educated the less oppressed they can be."

Currently, the squadron from Fort

Carson, Colo., and the Civil Affairs team from Utica, N.Y., have at least six more school projects in the works. However, schools aren't the only projects on the minds of the Soldiers.

Fedak said getting reliable electricity, market renovations and working clinics are also a priority.

Making the community a better place, Fedak said, isn't everything. He hopes the communities will take charge of their areas and empower themselves against anti-Iraqi forces.

"The more that we can have local support, the more power that they'll have, and the more they'll see we're actually doing something for them," he said. "So, if we can empower these people maybe they can overcome the situation they live in and actually run the terrorist out of their neighborhoods."



(Photo by Spc. Alexis Harrison, 2-1 Cav. Public Affairs)

An Iraqi policeman is swarmed by anxious children while he hands out flags to celebrate the reopening of the Al Nahraen boys' school in Al Doura Jan. 10. Coalition troops and Iraqi police were on hand during the event that let more than 3,200 boys go back to a newer, better school.

Baghdad in Brief

Iraqi Army, coalition forces find IED

BAGHDAD - A combined patrol found and secured an improvised explosive device west of Al-Iskandariyah, Iraq Jan. 27.

Soldiers from the Iraqi Army and paratroopers of Company A, 1st Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, found the IED in the town of Jurf as Sakhr, Iraq. The roadside bomb consisted of two artillery rounds.

The joint patrol cordoned off the area and searched a house nearby. An explosive ordnance detachment secured the explosive device and cleared the site.

Iraqi Army Tankers Arrest Suspected Insurgent

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Iraqi Army troops here arrested a local Iraqi national in a drive-by shooting incident Jan. 28.

Iraqi troops from the 2nd Brigade, 9th IA Division (Mechanized) were on a patrol near Taji when the suspect, riding in a car, allegedly opened fire on their T-72 tanks. The troops detained the man and confiscated an AK-47 assault rifle from the man's vehicle.

The suspect is being held for further questioning.



Dental Care Available for Deployed Troops

Teeth

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mately 30 patients a day.

"Our main mission is to see coalition troops, but we see anyone who walks in the door," he said. Ramsay added that active duty troops have priority in the clinic and won't be turned away.

The primary mission for these clinics is caring for troops, but they don't stop with troops. The clinics also provide services to civilians and third-country nationals, said Martinez, a native of Caguas, Puerto Rico.

Martinez said it feels very much like being back at home working in the dental clinic here because of all the state-of-the-art equipment in the clinic, but there is one difference.

"The only difference here is that we are away from our family," said the expecting father of twin baby boys. Even with two babies on the way, the service he is able to provide the troops in Iraq is very important

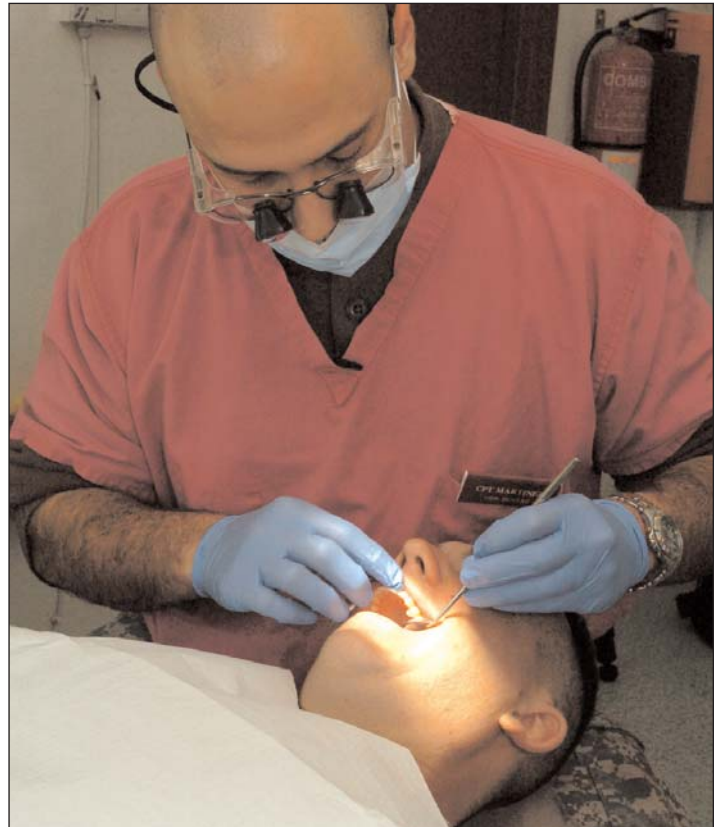
to him, Martinez said.

"The work I do is important for the Soldiers to accomplish the mission," he said. "When they come in and tell me, 'I was out last night and my tooth was killing me,' and I fix it and they are out again doing their mission the next day. It definitely feels good."

There are dentists waiting to assist in keeping teeth healthy while deployed, but Ramsay says there are things that troops can do to help prevent the need to seek dental care.

When traveling on the roads throughout Iraq, Ramsay suggests troops wear mouth protectors, like the ones athletes wear. This will prevent teeth from getting broken or knocked-out due to the environment. He added that it is important for troops to brush their teeth on a regular basis.

If a dental emergency does arise and the local dental clinic is not open, Soldiers should see their Troop Medical Clinic for assistance.



(Photos by Staff Sgt. Mary Rose, 7th MPAD)

Spc. Martin Holsinger has his teeth worked on by Capt. Miguel Martinez, a dentist from and a native of Caguas, Puerto Rico, with the 3rd Medical Command at the Liberty Dental Clinic at Camp Liberty in Baghdad.



(Photo by U.S. Army)

Sit boy, sit!

Sgt. Herald Cory, a native of Newport News, Va., and a military working dog handler with 18th Military Police Brigade currently working with the 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment "Golden Dragons," 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, uses 'Wandor,' a military working dog, to screen civilian contractors entering Patrol Base Gator Swamp, Iraq Jan. 21. The Golden Dragons have been using the dogs to screen all contractors entering the base.

Paratroopers in combat with more than equipment

By Sgt. Mike Pryor
2-82 Abn. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - The Army makes sure that every Soldier going into combat has the best hardware and equipment money can buy. But hidden away somewhere underneath all the gear, most Soldiers carry items they weren't issued.

As they readied vehicles and equip-



(Photo by Sgt. Mike Pryor, 2-82 Abn. Public Affairs)

SPC. Benjamin West, with Co. D, 2nd Bn., 325th Abn. Inf. Regt., 2nd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div., fits a piece of colored cloth embroidered with the Star of David into his vest.

ment for combat recently, paratroopers with the 82nd Airborne Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team, based at Camp Taji, also filled their rucks and pockets with some extra personal items. The items ranged from the obvious, like extra ammo and batteries, to the bizarre, like a lucky Sesame Street doll.

Some paratroopers carry pictures of loved ones and others carry pictures that remind them of what they are fighting for.

Spc. Brad Griffith of Charlotte, N.C., an infantryman with Company B, 1st Bn., 325th AIR, has pictures of American prisoners of war taped to the radio mount inside the humvee he drives. The pictures, he said, remind him of what could happen if he ever lets his guard down. They also give him the inspiration to carry out his mission even when he gets frustrated.

Soldiers are famously superstitious, and 2nd BCT troopers are no exception. Many carry talismans or charms for good luck - playing cards, rabbit's feet, individual rounds worn smooth from being rubbed between their fingers, socks they never change. Sgt. Jason Price, of Co. D, 2nd Bn., 325th AIR carries an American flag signed by all the members of his old platoon. "It's for good luck," Price said.

One 2nd BCT paratrooper is known for carrying a Sesame Street "Ernie" doll everywhere he goes as a lucky charm. He didn't want his name used in this article.

"Ernie doesn't like attention," he said.

Some troopers carry religious icons or

medallions for spiritual strength. Many have a copy of the "Soldier's Bible", small enough to fit easily into a cargo pocket or assault pack pouch. Spc. Benjamin West of Tempe, Ariz., an infantryman with Co. D, 2nd Bn., 325th AIR, carries a small strip of red cloth embroidered with the Jewish Star of David tucked into the flap of his body armor. The cloth was stitched by West's aunt, who said a special prayer for him before she sent it. West likes to wear it close to his heart.

Not every item the paratroopers carry has such deep significance. Some are strictly for comfort. Spc. Cody Needham of Springville, La., a team sergeant with Battery A, 2nd Bn., 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, never used to leave the wire without extra packs of cigarettes. Now he carries something even better - a nicotine inhaler. The inhaler, he said, packs a little more punch.

One last item that almost all the paratroopers seem to carry is a small notebook or diary to jot down their thoughts. Sgt. Tamara Brown of Co. F, 407th Brigade Support Battalion, from Laurinburg, N.C., is on her first deployment to Iraq. She carries a notepad with her so she can write down her impressions of life in a combat zone. But when Brown finishes work late at night, she said, she's usually too tired to write. Her notepad is still mostly empty.

"I really don't know when I'll find the time," Brown said.

But she carries it anyway, just in case.

TELEVISION



	8:00p.m.	8:30p.m.	9:00p.m.	9:30p.m.	10:00p.m.	10:30p.m.	11:00p.m.
AFN sports	Sports Center		ESPNNews	ESPNNews	Australian Open Tennis Championship		
AFN prime ATLANTIC	Headline News	ATS/Regional News	All of Us	Eve	I vs 100		Without a Trace
AFN news	MSNBC Live		MSNBC Live		Fox News Live		Studio B